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Security Council

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Letter dated 15 July 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to the letter dated 9 July 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to you (S/2013/402), I have the honour to draw the attention of the Security Council to the renewed fighting in North Kivu.

1. Renewed fighting in North Kivu

Reports from North Kivu province, in particular from Mutaho, which is located some 10 kilometres from Goma, indicate that yesterday, Sunday, 14 July 2013, bloody clashes occurred between the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the terrorist rebels of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) supported by specialist units from Rwanda. With this support, the M23 rebels and their Rwandan allies attacked FARDC positions in the early hours of Sunday morning. Those positions were forced to defend themselves and repel the enemy. This provocative act violates the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, which requires the parties to act in a responsible manner and thus give the political process in the Great Lakes Region a chance to succeed. Such acts are also the cause of the human suffering that occurs regularly in this part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where civilians, women and children have been condemned to wander about their own country over the past two decades.

2. Letter from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda

It is apparent that the sole purpose of the letter dated 9 July 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Security Council, in which it is alleged that FARDC, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Intervention Brigade are collaborating with the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), was to prepare public opinion for the current aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is being conducted by specialist units of the Rwandan army, acting under the guise of the M23 terrorists. The purpose of this aggression is to block the deployment under way of the Intervention Brigade.

My Government notes with regret that Rwanda, by approaching the Security Council directly, has not followed the established procedure that is applicable in such cases. At the Great Lakes Region level, the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism established by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) is responsible for investigating all allegations made by member countries. Rwanda has deliberately refused to turn to this regional mechanism to assess the veracity of these allegations because it knows that they are baseless.

It goes without saying that it was in good faith that the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in collaboration with Rwanda, undertook some years ago to put an end to the presence of FDLR in Congolese territory. FARDC then continued these efforts in cooperation with MONUSCO. If it had not been for the instability created by the M23 terrorists, the joint military operations of FARDC and MONUSCO could have proved so successful that there would no longer be any talk of FDLR in Congolese territory. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose civilian populations are the only victims in the region who suffer the torments of repeated FDLR attacks, has no interest in seeing its army collaborate in any way with these destructive Rwandan forces.

In other words, the FARDC do not collaborate with FDLR and do not supply them with weapons or ammunition. If Rwanda has any proof of its allegations, my Government calls on it to follow the established procedure by having recourse to the ICGLR Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism.

Since the FDLR issue is one of the pretexts most often used by Rwanda to destabilize the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government wishes to remind the Council of the proposal made at the most recent African Union Summit, inviting Rwanda to negotiate with FDLR. Such a solution would provide the opportunity to achieve lasting peace in the region.

Consequently, my Government urges the Security Council to:

(1) Condemn the renewed fighting in Mutaho by the Rwandan special forces, operating under the guise of M23;

(2) Order the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Rwandan special forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(3) Call on Rwanda to hold internal dialogue with its rebel groups and to submit to the democratic process like other African countries;

(4) Call on Rwanda in particular, and the countries of the region in general, to respect the commitments that they have freely made, in accordance with the provisions of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

My Government calls on the Security Council to follow up on this letter and requests that it should be circulated as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) Ignace **Gata Mavita**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative